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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Tyler Patrick Gray, Secretary

DATE: April 4, 2025

SUBJECT: Department of Energy and Natural Resources Re-Organization

Today marks a pivotal transition to a newly structured Department of Conservation and Energy (DCE). I'm pleased to update you on our Department of Energy & Natural Resources (DENR) Reorganization Bill, introduced by Senator Bob Hensgens as a formal legislative instrument. Senator Thomas Pressly will separately sponsor the creation of a centralized authority in North Louisiana—connected to the DRIVE Initiative yet operating independently from DENR's reorganization. Together, these measures reflect a major milestone in modernizing how Louisiana manages its critical natural resources.

As Representative Jacob Landry further demonstrates his leadership in shaping these policies, he is introducing legislation for the Saltwater and Oil Assessment Process (SOAP). Building on his previous collaboration with stakeholders, SOAP aligns closely with Senator Hensgens' version and is designed to establish a clearer legal framework for future remedial claims. It creates a forward-looking standard that increases predictability for the regulated community by laying out consistent expectations and highlighting real-world benefits with certainty through finality with all agencies signing off on any action. Because the SOAP proposal is prospective, it will only apply to remedial claims filed after a specified date once enacted.

Key Advantages:

- **Improved Certainty:** Establishes clear guidelines for saltwater and oil-related disputes, giving all parties a reliable pathway to resolution.
- **Streamlined Process:** Creates a unified evaluation and remediation framework to reduce duplication, speed up procedures, and enhance accountability.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Encourages cooperation among operators, landowners, and state agencies, leading to more efficient, science-based remediation solutions.

In crafting these reforms—including the new entity CURRENT—Senator Hensgens, Senator Pressly, Representative Landry, Representative Neil Riser, and Representative Josh Carlson have championed a more transparent, flexible, and solutions-oriented department. The newly formed CURRENT serves as a counterpart to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) by focusing on managing water for navigation, recreation, and economic development outside the coast.

Leadership Classification

Under the proposed legislation, the existing “Assistant Secretary” and “Commissioner” positions will be retitled as “Executive Directors,” leaving three top-level roles: Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Undersecretary. This structure balances oversight while staying within executive branch authority. The Secretary will have forward-facing authority to act swiftly, including the flexibility to tailor leadership as state needs evolve. Meanwhile, the Deputy Secretary will supervise the Natural Resources Commission, tasked with preventing regulatory overreach, promoting consistent statutory application, and eliminating outdated provisions—similar to the original 1908 commission that led to the Department of Conservation’s founding in 1912.

The Undersecretary’s responsibilities expand to include both internal and external investigative and audit capabilities. By ensuring prudent fiscal stewardship while carrying out legislative policies, this position functions as an essential check-and-balance in agency spending, following recognized accounting standards. Simultaneously, the Secretary focuses on daily operations.

Our Three Pillars for Reorganization

These pillars are foundational to the department’s mission, aiming to foster accountability, sustainable growth, and practical solutions for Louisiana’s citizens and businesses:

- **Transparency:** We commit to open governance, strong budget oversight, and clear communication with regulated communities and stakeholders.
- **Balance:** By integrating conservation and energy functions, we promote environmental stewardship alongside economic expansion, creating a stable climate for ongoing investment.
- **Solutions:** From refining permitting processes to modernizing data platforms, our efforts aim to reduce bureaucracy, expedite workflows, and produce tangible outcomes for industries and communities alike.

Next Steps

Detailed Guidance: We will soon release updated organizational charts, revised job titles, and new procedures.

Landing Page: Before the next legislative session, we plan to unveil a comprehensive web portal with real-time updates, FAQs, and an interactive feedback forum.

Collaborative Transition: We will host stakeholder sessions to gather insights on rulemaking, policy enhancements, and any concerns you anticipate.

Moving forward, we encourage you to review the newly posted legislative instruments as they become available and to share ideas on how these reforms can streamline operations for you and your organizations. If you have immediate questions, please feel free to reach out.

In closing, thank you for your continued partnership. We remain dedicated to fostering a strong, innovative regulated community as we enter this new era of alignment and modernization. For written comments, please email me at tyler.gray@la.gov or dnrinfo@la.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TG' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Tyler Gray, Secretary
Louisiana Department of
Energy and Natural Resources

- C: The Honorable Jeffrey M. Landry, Governor, State of Louisiana *(by e-mail)*
 Kyle Ruckert, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor, State of Louisiana *(by e-mail)*
 Lance Maxwell, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor, State of Louisiana *(by e-mail)*
 The Honorable Cameron Henry, President, Louisiana Senate, *(by e-mail)*
 The Honorable Phillip Devillier, Speaker, Louisiana House of Representatives *(by e-mail)*